



A GOVERNMENT CENTER
FOR PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

by
William L. Kite, Jr.
B.S., Rhode Island School of Design (1960)

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER
OF ARCHITECTURE at the MASSACHUSETTS
INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

September

1961

.....
William L. Kite, Jr.
Department of Architecture
August 14, 1961

certified by

.....
Imre Halasz
Thesis Supervisor

accepted by

.....
Lawrence B. Anderson
Head of the Department of Architecture

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To those people who willingly gave their time to help me produce this thesis, I express my deepest thanks. Their names are listed below:

Imre Halasz
Assistant Professor of Architecture
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Benard Rudofsky
Visiting Critic - M.I.T.
Professor of Architecture
Yale University

Dieter Hammerschlag
Project Director
Downtown Providence Master Plan Project

Ernest E. Kirwan
Project Designer
Downtown Providence Master Plan Project

Charles Wood
Assistant to Mayor
Providence City Hall

Ernest Friday
State Redevelopment Agency
Providence, Rhode Island

Mr. Town
Project Director
Boston Federal Office Building
The Architects Collaborative

I also wish to acknowledge William Gerold of Providence, who did nearly all of the photographic work and Jan Wampler for his assistance. My deepest thanks goes to my wife, Linna, whose untiring devotion and constant help made this thesis possible.

FOREWORD



FOREWORD

During my fifth year at the Rhode Island School of Design, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to work with the Providence City Plan Commission on a new Master Plan Project for Providence, Rhode Island. During this period I gave considerable thought to that proposal as it was developed. Certain aspects of the plan disturbed me as I contemplated their eventual existence, and it became my strong contention that more challenging and functional ways to solve the problem might be possible. By no means do I propose to ridicule what has been done thus far in the total redevelopment plan. Rather I have attempted to deal more directly with a specific area within that plan.

Therefore, as a thesis project, I offer the following pages and accompanying drawings and illustrations as my conception for a plan for a "Government Center for Providence, Rhode Island." A detailed study of this complex was the idea originally conceived, but due to the tremendous amount of site planning required when a different site for this project was chosen, no detailed plans could be developed.

As time was of the essence, it seemed advisable to concentrate upon a study involving the problem from a site planning point of view. This then has been the purpose of this thesis.

It is my hope that this study will prove valuable by showing new possibilities for the development of such an important complex. If this thesis would spark a renewed interest in the total design of this center, or if a re-evaluation of the presently proposed design is brought about for consideration, I will feel that what I have done would be a work well justified.

I am well satisfied that the time and work put into this thesis has been worth while and I have enjoyed the opportunity to study the many problems involved in reshaping the city's environment.

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this thesis has been to study the problem of a Government Center for Providence, R.I. The need for such a study is pressing, as the soon to be published "Downtown Providence Master Plan Project" has proposed the building of such a center. As I felt that the site proposed in this project was not the most ideal for such a use, this thesis proposes a different location than that chosen by the city.

The section bounded by Smith Street, College Hill, the northernmost edge of downtown, and the proposed freeway loop is presently a blighted area. With the redevelopment it would become the governmental heart of the city, and insure renewed activity along the now dead side of downtown. This is the primary purpose of this thesis.

Scale, character, and the existing geometry of the city proper have all been considered. It is my hope that by redevelopment of this area, the environment and apparent sense of order of the Mall, the Capitol, and downtown will be improved, and a dignified setting befitting the character and purpose of government functions will be achieved.

Imre Halasz
Thesis Supervisor

57 Strathmore Road
Brookline 46, Mass.
August 14, 1961

Dean Pietro Belluschi
Dean of the School of Architecture
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Dear Dean Belluschi:

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of Master of Architecture, I hereby submit this thesis
entitled "A Government Center for Providence, Rhode Island."

Sincerely,

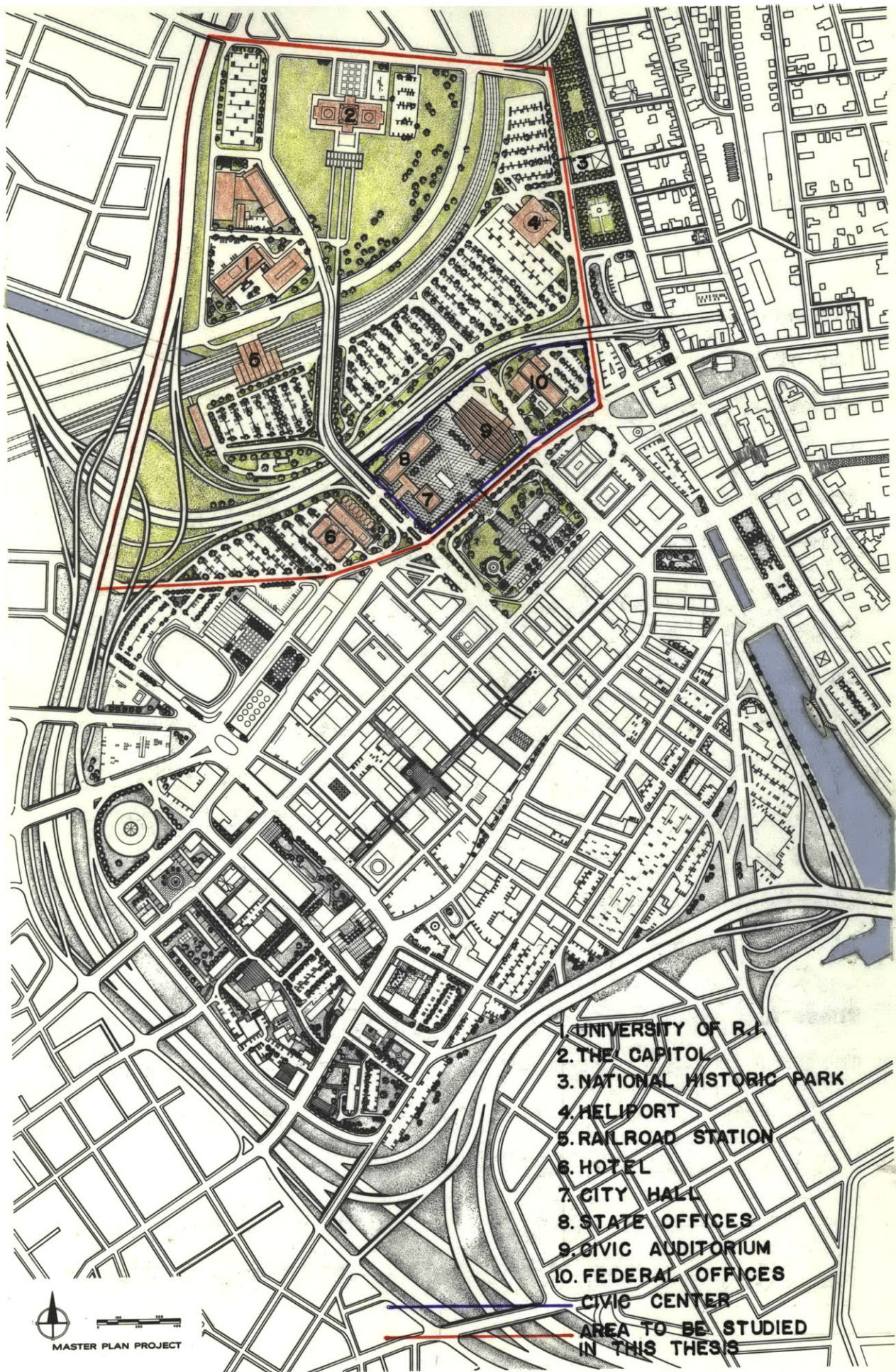
William L. Kite, Jr.
Department of Architecture
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

1

THE PROBLEM

DOWNTOWN PROVIDENCE

AS REDEVELOPED BY THE PROVIDENCE CITY PLAN COMMISSION



THE PROBLEM

For many years Providence has been considering the possibility of building a Government Center, or a "Civic Center" as it has been more commonly referred to. Such a center would place in one location the various branches of city, state and federal government agencies, which are presently scattered in numerous buildings throughout the city. This decentralization is not only inconvenient, it is uneconomical. Present facilities are crowded, storage is inadequate and in most cases parking is a major problem. The savings made possible with a centralized operation and maintenance, as well as common parking facilities, utilities and green areas are all good economics. The large sum of money now being spent to rent old structures, both unsuitable in character and inadequate in size, could be more profitably used to retire the bonds for a new structure.

These are in general some of the reasons why a government center should be built. There is little disagreement on its need, but there can be much disagreement upon the site which should be chosen for its construction.

Shortly the "Downtown Master Plan Project," prepared by the Providence City Plan Commission, will go to press. This is

a comprehensive study of that area of the city encompassed by the proposed north-south freeway and College Hill. This area, although only a mere half mile in diameter, contains the retail, financial and governmental heart of the city. This report has already shown indication that it will play an important part in the future development of Providence, and one of its major proposals is that of a Civic Center.

Unfortunately, the area chosen for the development of this "Center" is not the most ideal. The Plan Commission proposes relocating the railroad tracks and the station. The site for the new Civic Center would then be on that area presently housing the railroad station. This area is presumably "ideal for this purpose" because:

1. It is the only open land in the very heart of Providence.
2. The site is equally convenient to the retail and office districts as well as to other governmental functions.
3. Its close proximity to the future freeway interchange will provide an ultimate degree of automotive access from the entire metropolitan area and all of southern New England.
4. Being in an open area it can be seen from all directions.
5. There is ample room for related activities, such as a transportation complex (rail and helicopter) and exhibition and cultural facilities.¹

Such considerations are of course valid, and should be realized in any proposed site for the development of such a com-

¹Downtown Providence 1970, a preliminary report published by the Providence City Plan Commission; 1960.

plex. But it is the contention of this thesis that the site proposed for the Civic Center by the Master Plan not only does not fulfill these requirements adequately, but also does not recognize the chaos which presently engulfs the State Capitol, and only adds to that confusion. Any site proposed for the construction of such a complex should be so planned as to bring the Capitol into closer relationship with downtown, not continue to leave it an isolated element perched on an inaccessible hill.

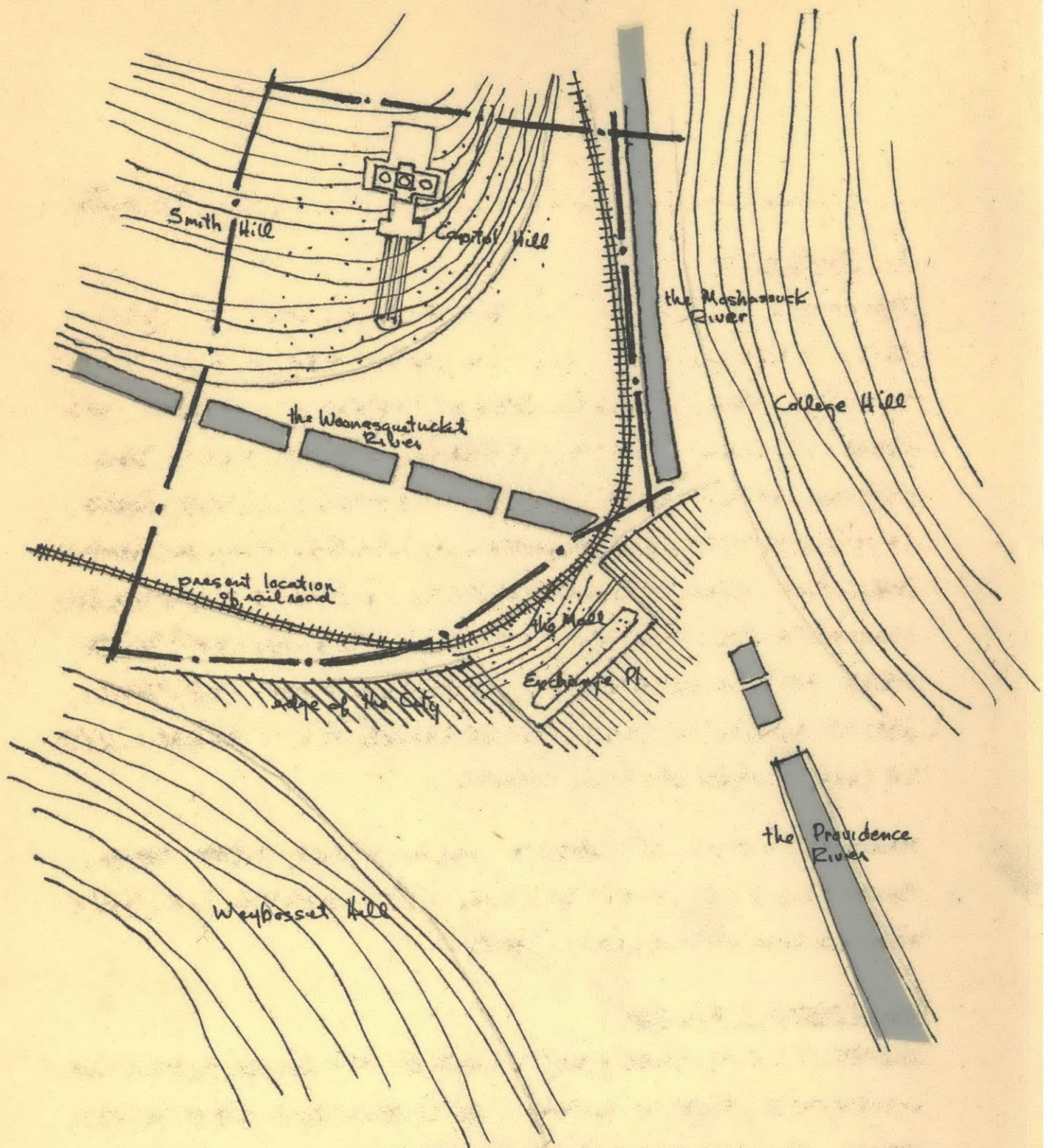
It will then be the purpose of this thesis to study the area from the Capitol to downtown; an area now choked by railroad viaducts, roads and parking lots; an area completely overlooked by the Master Plan proposal. Within this area a site for the Civic Center (hereafter referred to as "the Government Center") will be developed and a connection will be formed linking the Capitol with downtown.

Due to the limited time available, the scope of this thesis will be limited to that of a site planning nature. No detailed plans of the Government Center will be developed, although enough detail will be shown to give a general indication of the character of the complex desired.

THE SITE

- A. Topography
- B. General Character
- C. Railroad Relocation
- D. East-West Freeway and Interchange Relocation
- E. Fox Point Dam
- F. The Woonasquatucket, Moshassuck and Providence Rivers





THE SITE

A. Topography

The area is marked by the hills which surround it. Smith Hill, of which Capitol Hill is a part, rises to some eighty feet above mean high water level. College Hill to the east rises at almost a thirty degree angle above North Main Street. At the present site of the railroad station, there is a slight rise from eight feet at Exchange Place to twenty-three feet just behind the station. A slow steady rise is observable from the east to west. Another low section is found between Dorrance and Exchange Streets (six feet), sloping upward to twenty feet at Empire, and to between forty to fifty feet at Franklin Street.

Much of the rest of the area was originally under water. Therefore, it is primarily filled land, averaging some eight feet above mean high water level.²

B. General Character

The entire area encompassing Capitol Hill to the north, the northernmost edge of downtown up to Exchange Place to the south, the proposed freeway to the west, and up to Canal

²Downtown Providence, a report by the Providence City Plan Commission, Report No.1; October 1958; pp. 3-48.

Street at the base of College Hill to the east is presently a blighted area.

The railroad cuts along the edge of downtown on an elevated viaduct, creating a Chinese wall between downtown and the Capitol. A network of crisscrossing roads cuts the rest of the area into unused, irregular shaped segments. The greatest majority of these are used for parking purposes.

The only major buildings within the area are Barnard School, which is presently preparing plans for a new building outside the limits of this study, and the old State Education Buildings to the west of the Capitol. These buildings were vacated by the Rhode Island College of Education a few years ago and are now being used for various State uses. They will no longer be required with the construction of new facilities in a Government Center. The majority of these structures are in poor condition and should be taken down. A study for a new central wholesale food market is presently nearing completion, so that the old warehouses and food markets along Canal Street will be removed.

The Woonasquatucket River flows along the base of Capitol Hill and converges with the Providence River at the eastern most end of Exchange Place. The Moshassuck River flows north to south along the base of College Hill and joins the other two rivers at this same point. Both of these rivers are presently unattractive narrow slits, half covered by roads and





parking lots. They flow almost unnoticed past old warehouses, railroad tracks and parking lots.

The only fairly attractive section is Capitol Hill itself. Rising some seventy feet above the river bed, it has at its summit the Capitol. The surface of the hill is attractively landscaped, which makes a welcomed relief in an otherwise dreary location. A broad promenade extending from the base of the hill to the Capitol is never used due to the inaccessibility of the area to pedestrians. The back of the Capitol therefore becomes the major entrance.

C. Railroad Relocation

Perhaps the most important single step which may be taken to free the region is the relocation of the railroad. When in 1908 the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad constructed a railway viaduct to allow three north-south streets to pass, an eyesore was created that has all but destroyed the entire section. With relocation this eyesore can be removed, and the area can again be restored to its once inviting atmosphere.

There is no longer any reason why the tracks and station must remain where they are. Freight was carried exclusively by the railroad a half century ago. Today long haul trucks have taken over much of this freight, and the small portion still carried by rail can be successfully carried on in a more decentralized location. Thus a great deal of the trackage pre-

sently within the downtown area is surplus. Total trackage now required is one third of that presently in use.

There is, in fact, strong reason to doubt whether the railroad will even continue to exist under its present usage. Therefore it is important to assume that any proposal for the railroad be strongly tied to a short-haul commuter service. As the railroad runs through many of the surrounding suburban communities, such a commuter service could be easily initiated. A service such as this providing efficient, convenient rapid transit at rush hours would not only help to solidify the railroads shaky position, but also would help to relieve the already choked traffic condition.

Based on this assumption as a determining factor in the survival of downtown, any railroad relocation must be conveniently tied to the downtown area and the Government Center.

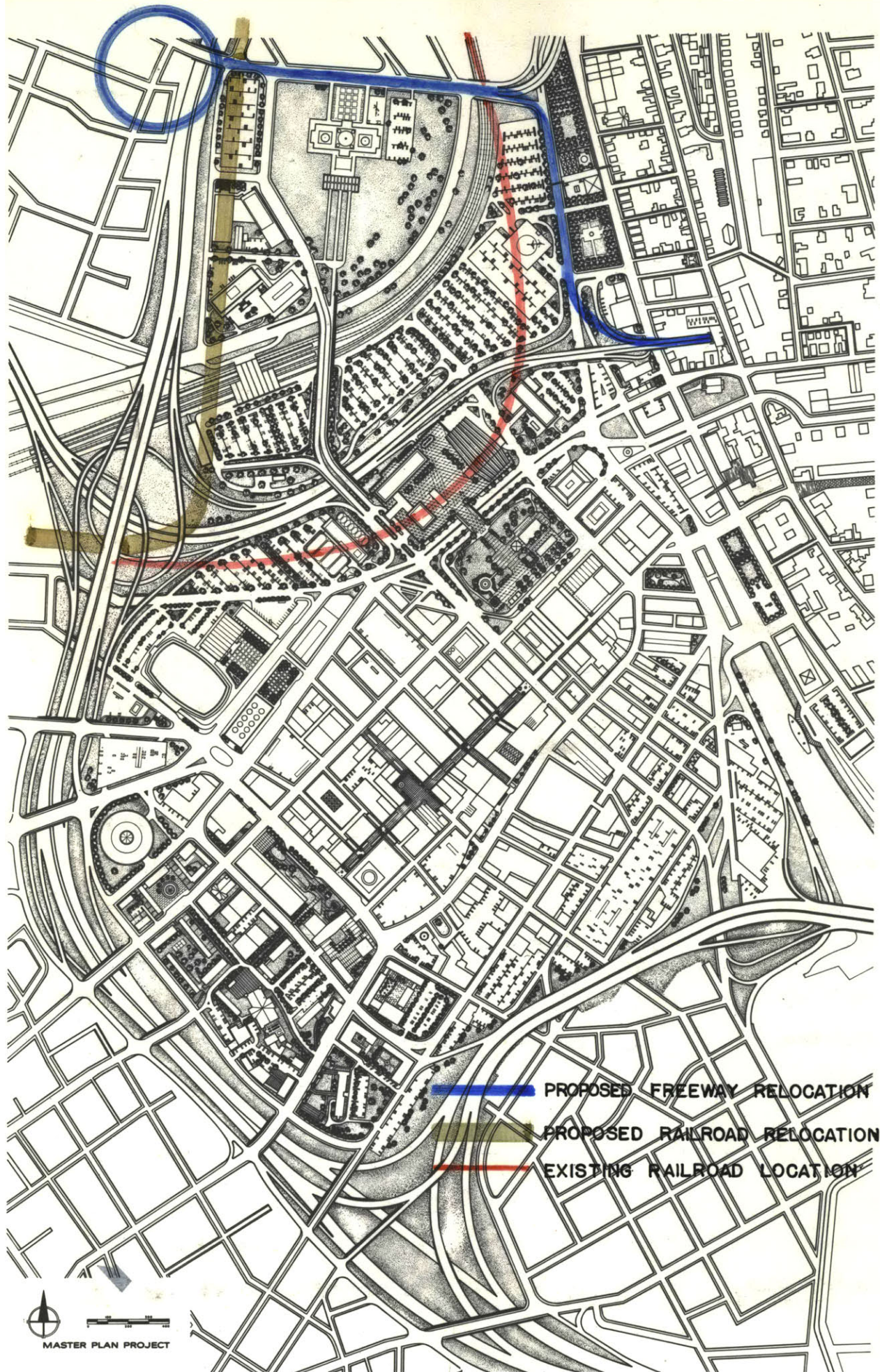
As the greatest aid in freeing the study area, a relocation of the railroad is proposed following the freeway route over Smith Hill and rejoining the present trackage to the north of the Capitol. This would allow the railroad station to be located within the freeway loop and to be closely connected to both downtown and the Government Center. It would remove the obstacle of tracks between the Capitol and downtown as a first step in creating a pedestrian linkage between them.

The grade of Smith Hill is a gradual one; there would be no problem of climbing it. By depressing the tracks and follow-





DOWNTOWN PROVIDENCE



ing the freeway loop one of the biggest eyesores in the downtown area may be removed.

D. East-West Freeway and Interchange Relocation

The most important development which will affect the future of downtown Providence is the proposed new freeway loop system. A part of Interstate 95, running from Maine to Florida, this road will allow the downtown area to be readily accessible from all compass points. In addition to the increased accessibility, the north-south freeway will remove about 50 per cent of all through traffic from the downtown streets. At present these through vehicles have no choice but to funnel through the already congested streets. Thus in every respect this loop system should prove to be an invaluable help to the survival of downtown Providence.

Connected to this north-south freeway is a major east-west connection to the Olneyville Expressway and Connecticut Turnpike. This connection is presently being proposed to run across town, through College Hill via a tunnel vacated by the railroad relocation, and then over the new Red Bridge to East Providence. These two major freeways would converge in a massive interchange on the western edge of downtown.

Although the necessity of these two roads has already been acknowledged, the choice of location is questioned----especially that location taken by the east-west connector and the interchange. To cut across an area so valuable by its very

proximity to downtown does not seem good economics. Moreover such a road would forever seal the already broken connection between downtown and the Capitol. The interchange itself eats up a quantity of valuable space in excess of that devoted to the entire Mall.

Therefore, it shall be the proposal of this study to relocate the east-west connector and its accompanying interchange to the north of the Capitol along the present route of Smith Street, down along the foot of College Hill at the present site of Canal Street, and then into the tunnel to the Red Bridge and East Providence.

By making a depressed highway along Smith Street, the existing north-south streets could run above uninterrupted. It would follow this route down Smith Hill, on grade along Canal Street and up into the tunnel. With the proposed location of a National Historic Park at the site of Roger William's spring at the base of College Hill, no local traffic will be required along Canal Street, thus making it an ideal location for a highway.

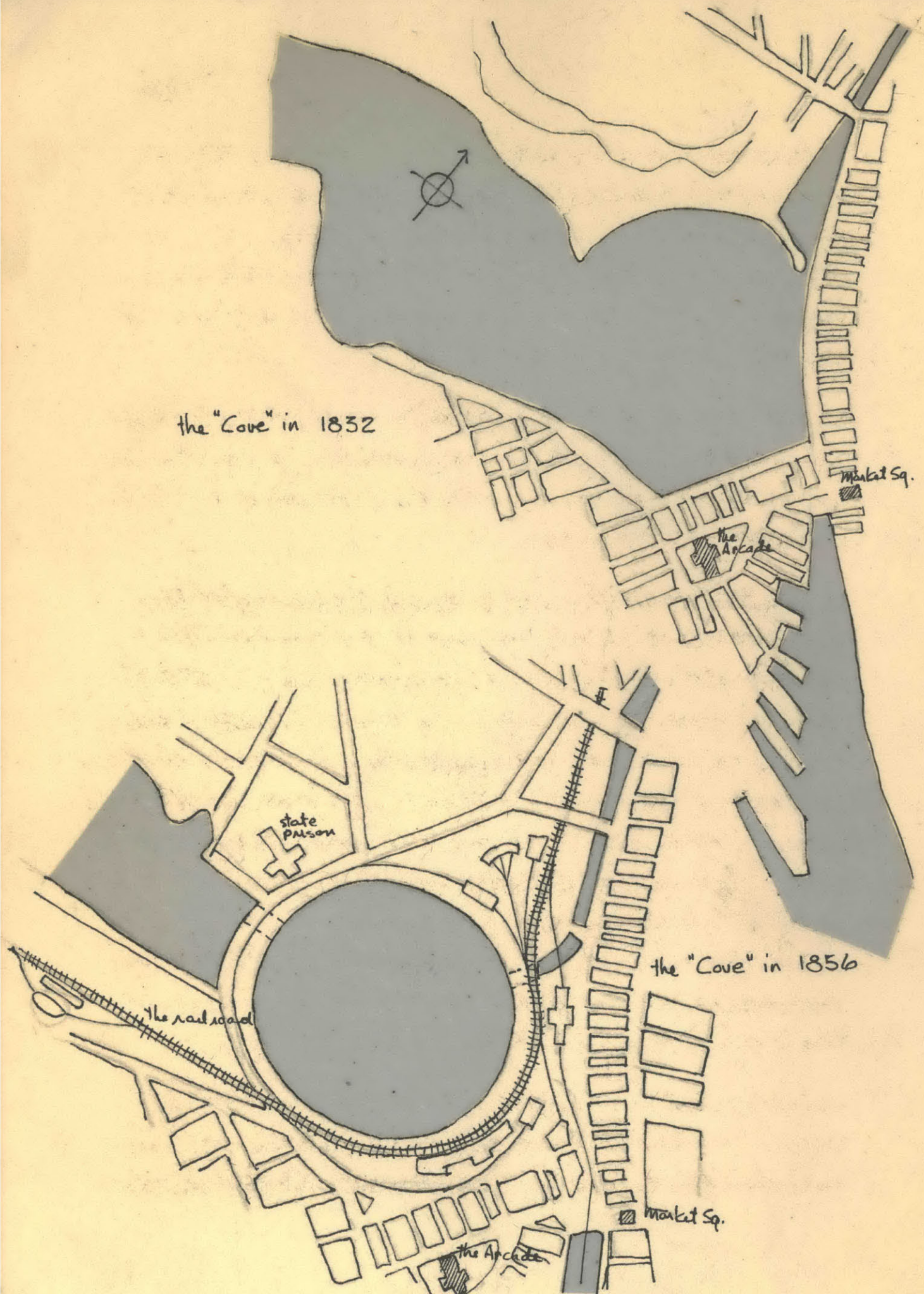
This would be the final step in freeing the region of obstacles. No through traffic would have to pass in the area. It becomes an area which may be devoted solely to local traffic and pedestrian movement.

E. Fox Point Dam

Construction will soon begin on the new Fox Point Dam at the



the "Cove" in 1832



mouth of the Providence River. It is the hope that this construction will diminish the chance of future damages such as those which occurred during the last hurricanes to hit this area. Ravaging floods caused extensive damage throughout the downtown area, filling much of the low lying sections of the city with upwards of ten feet of water.

This dam will allow the water level to be adequately controlled throughout the city. It will, therefore, be possible to use the three rivers which flow through the area as an important element of the design.

F. The Woonasquatucket, Moshassuck and Providence Rivers

An examination of the earliest maps of the city discloses a number of striking features. A large cove, having an area of some 160 acres, covered most of the present Exchange Place, the railroad yards, the Municipal Parking lot and much of the land north of Sabin and Aborn Streets. The Cove received the waters of the Woonasquatucket and Moshassuck Rivers from the north and converged at Weybosset Neck near the present Market Square and Westminster Street. South of the neck the Cove emptied into the Great Salt River, which was much wider than the present Providence River. It covered the site of Dyer Street as well as all the streets southeast of Pine.

Connecting the Neck with the east bank was the Weybosset Bridge. This was the first and for many years the only connection across the river. The main road to Newport and the

southern sections of the state joined this bridge. Following the present site of Weybosset Street, this road passed through swampy marshes which covered the west side of the river.

Beginning with the Tillinghast Wharf at Transit Street in 1690, the 18th century saw the growth of merchantile and industrial activity along the Providence River below the Weybosset Bridge to Fox Point on the east bank and to Ship Street on the west. Many docks were built; all the streets from Weybosset to the River were originally wharves; the longest was at Custom House Street.

There was a good deal of exporting done at this time, and yards which used local lumber resources were founded to build ships for this maritime traffic. The first shipyard was constructed by Nathaniel Brown in 1711, on the site of Exchange Place. Other shipyards followed at Fox Point, India Point, Smith Street and elsewhere along the River. In the 18th and 19th centuries Providence was a major port.

The business and trade of Providence continued to grow during the 18th and 19th centuries. The Market House was built in 1774 at the east approach to the Weybosset Bridge. Market Square was a stopping point for travelers and a terminal for stage coaches.

A string of warehouses, stores and counting houses grew up along the main street on the west side of the River, to the

south of the Market House near the farms and homes of the East Side. The retail shopping center of the town rose north of Market Square.

During the 19th century, shipping declined in competition with New York and Boston. However, economic development continued with the establishment of textile mills, iron works and the jewelry industry.

With the decline in shipping, a new fixed Weybosset Bridge was constructed which closed the Cove to navigation. Much of the west bank of the River was filled in; between 1817-1827, Canal, Dyer and other streets were laid out.

One of the most crucial events in the history of downtown Providence was the filling in of the Cove, and the confining of its banks by the railroad companies (1846-1850). On filled land at Exchange Place a railway depot was built, and connections established between Boston and New York. Toward the close of the century, the Cove was completely filled in by the city, and in the early 1900's the railroad station was moved to its present location.³

With the relocation of the railroad and with the completion of the Fox Point Dam, it will be possible to re-establish the Cove as a most welcome relief in the heart of the city. Although it will not be navigable water, small boats launched

³John H. Cady, The Civic and Architectural Development of Providence; Providence; 1957.

within it could provide new activity and excitement within the downtown core. By taking advantage of this element, a new relationship can be found between the City, the Capitol and College Hill.

The Woonasquatucket and Moshassuck Rivers can be reexposed and again participate in the downtown area. Renewed relationships can be achieved between building masses and water, thus creating a more forceful environment to the city core.





THE PROGRAM



THE PROGRAM

This thesis has been prepared using the same basic program as that used by the Master Plan project. Although changes in major land usage were found necessary, few additions or subtractions from that program seemed advisable.

The "Civic Center", proposed in the Master Plan Report, consists of City, State and Federal office structures and a civic auditorium and exhibition hall. This complex was located on the northernmost edge of the Mall on the present site of the railroad station. It was the hope of its designers that a visual connection would occur between that complex and the Capitol through a carefully planned break between buildings.

However, as has already been stated this type of "loose" connection is not the most ideal. Therefore, this thesis proposes the location of the Government Center at the base of Capitol Hill where a full axial connection can be made.

It is felt that the governmental functions should occur in a more separate location, set apart from the everyday activity of other events. In this way a more dignified setting for such functions can be realized. Such a location, by its very separation, acquires a certain degree of symbolism befitting a center of government.

Therefore, the civic auditorium and exhibition hall have been removed from this complex to a location opposite the government center and more directly connected to downtown. In this manner a "civic plaza" is developed which has a strong visual connection to the government center yet is separated from it by the Cove, which has been placed between them.

On this "plaza" is also found the transportation complex. This group contains all rail facilities, both commuter and long-distance and airline offices with a direct connection to the airport via helicopter. Unfortunately it is too late to include the bus terminal directly within this complex, as construction is about to begin for such a building on the site proposed by the Master Plan Project. However, this site lies in close proximity to the site selected for the transportation complex, and a pedestrian linkage has been provided to bring this facility into the transportation center.

The new hotel proposed by the Master Plan has been relocated directly on the water's edge and closely connected to the Mall.

There has been much talk lately of building a "motor hotel" in downtown Providence. Many locations have been mentioned for it; among them the site of the old Narragansett Hotel. As an ideal site for such a facility lies within the area encompassed by this thesis, it is felt advisable to include it within the program. This site is located in that area bet-

ween the Cove and the freeway, while fronting on the water's edge.

The only other major addition to the Master Plan's program is the inclusion of several office buildings. It seemed that the omission of these, in such an ideal location, would be a noticeable loss to the entire project. These buildings would have direct connections to transportation facilities, hotels and other related activities. This would provide a new source of activity on the "dead" side of the city and would insure pedestrian activity along the four sides of the Mall.

The Narragansett Electric Company's new office building, which the Master Plan proposed on the site of the old City Hall has been included in these new office buildings on the edge of the Cove.

This thesis proposes the keeping of the City Hall, remodeling it and turning it into a Museum of Natural History. The Master Plan Project proposed the remodeling of the old Federal Building into a Museum of Science and Industry. These two buildings could thereby be kept, and an era of Providence's old civic building would not be lost.

Along with these two buildings, this thesis proposes the construction of a Museum of Fine Art. Providence is at the present time completely without cultural facilities with the exception of the Rhode Island School of Design Museum. These

three buildings, all facing on the Mall, would allow this area to become the "cultural center" of Providence.

A new site has been found to house the proposed extension of the University of Rhode Island. This complex will house the four year degree program, the evening college credit program and an educational TV center. The Master Plan's proposal of facing this complex at an irregular angle to the Capitol falls into the same class of chaotic relationship which presently exists.

As College Hill is presently the site of four colleges, Brown University, Pembroke, Rhode Island School of Design and Bryant, it is felt that the URI extension school should also have a location more closely connected with the Hill. Therefore, a site has been chosen at the base of College Hill, close to the Mall and directly facing the Cove. Such a site will bring this school into the neighborhood of the other four and allow it close connection to the cultural facilities along the Mall.

Much of the parking within the area now, and reinstated by the Master Plan, has by necessity been removed. Adequate parking facilities have, however, been provided for each and all functions proposed within the area. In addition, two parking garages have been provided to service the entire project. They are located at either end of the development and feed into it.

It has been the contention of this thesis that this site is too valuable, both aesthetically and economically, to be devoted almost entirely to parking facilities. Moreover, it is not felt that it is the most ideally located area to provide for this type of function. Large open parking areas could more economically be provided outside the freeway loop, thus making inexpensive facilities for the all day parker. This study is also based upon the contention that commuter service will be provided to a large extent by the railroad, thus relieving the long-term parking problem. Short-term parking for shoppers would be provided in large parking garages scattered throughout the CBD.

GOVERNMENT CENTER PROGRAM

- A. City Hall
- B. State Office Building
- C. Federal Office Building

GOVERNMENT CENTER PROGRAM

A. City Hall

1. Executive Department	2,153 sq. ft.
2. City Council Chamber	2,500
3. City Clerk's Department	3,725
4. City Sergeant	1,359
5. Board of Canvassers & Registration	3,600
6. Health Department	5,000
7. Finance Department	17,184
8. Water Supply Board	9,900
9. Department of Public Works	8,533
10. Inspector of Plumbing & Drainage	2,000
11. Inspector of Building	2,700
12. Building & Zones Board of Review	1,200
13. Probate Court	11,645
14. Department of Law	1,900
15. Recorder of Deeds	8,384
16. Redevelopment Agency	2,640
17. City Plan Department	3,150
18. Traffic Engineering Department	<u>3,400</u>
	90,973 sq. ft.

Net Area 90,973 sq. ft.

Gross Area including 25% Circulation 121,200 sq. ft.

Cafeteria 4,000

Total Area 125,200 sq. ft.

Parking for 30 Cars

This program is based upon projected requirements required by the various departments in City Hall as compiled by the Mayor's Office, as well as the M. Arch. thesis written by Gavin Gray in 1950, for a New City Hall for Providence, R.I.

B. State Office Building

1. Executive Department	8,167 sq. ft.
2. Department of State	13,277
3. Treasury Department	2,809
4. Department of Administration	16,521
5. Department of Agriculture & Conservation	6,633
6. Department of Business Regulation	9,893
7. Department of Education	15,459
8. Department of Employment Security	51,641
9. Department of Labor	7,260
10. Department of Social Welfare	33,255
11. State Board of Tax Equilization	669
12. State Water Resources Coordinating Board	962
13. Workingmen's Compensation Commission	3,258
14. Committee on Children & Youth	180
15. Veterans' Organizations	<u>700</u>
	170,684 sq. ft.

Net Area 170,684 sq. ft.

Gross Area including 25% Circulation	227,500 sq. ft.
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Cafeteria	8,000
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Total Area	235,500 sq. ft.
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Parking for 50 Cars

This program is based upon an engineering report, compiled for the State in 1959. The purpose of this report was to evaluate present space and plan for the future requirements of the various departments.

C. Federal Office Building

1. Internal Revenue	70,000 sq. ft.
2. Veterans' Administration	10,000
3. Health, Education & Welfare	6,500
4. Commerce	5,000
5. Federal Housing Authority	5,000
6. Justice	10,000
7. Labor	15,000
8. National Labor Relations Board	5,000
9. Securities & Exchange	2,500
10. Selective Service	4,800
11. General Service Administration	30,800
12. G. S. A. (Custodial)	
a. Custodial	500
b. Health	300
c. Vending	100
d. Cafeteria	9,000

e. Building Management	300 sq. ft.
f. Mail	700
g. Locker Room & Toilets (employee)	1,600
h. Shops	1,600
i. Supply	4,500
j. Elevator Mechanical Room	<u>300</u>
	198,000 sq. ft.

Net Area 198,000 sq. ft.

Gross Area including 25% Circulation 264,000 sq. ft.

Parking for 60 Cars

This program is based upon that of the Boston Federal Office Building, as prepared by The Architects Collaborative. The area requirements were reduced proportionately to arrive at the total square foot figure required for Providence. The figure of 264,000 sq. ft. was supplied by the Mayor's Office as a tentative figure to work with.

DESIGN OBJECTIVES

- A. Scale
- B. Character
- C. The Cove
- D. The Geometry



DESIGN OBJECTIVES

A. Scale

As the site chosen for the development of the Government Center lies at the base of Capitol Hill, careful relationship between this complex, the Capitol, the City and the Hill itself is necessary. The Capitol assumes a dominating position overlooking the city and this relationship cannot be destroyed. Therefore, it was felt necessary to use a low mass, which could form an architectural base to the Hill and allow the Capitol to remain the dominating factor.

The city proper is composed largely of small scale elements. It is unique in the fine relationship existing between building mass and negative space. Any proposed new building within the city should also conform to this small scale quality. Thus a careful relationship in scale with this project and the rest of the city has been one of the major objectives of this thesis.

B. Character

The development of a proper character for such a government complex has been a prime objective. It was felt that this complex should clearly proclaim its purpose and improve the environment of that section of the city. It is hoped that

this center will give a more apparent sense of order to the Mall, the Capitol and the city proper.

Today's modern architecture has made little headway in creating a convincing symbol of government building. The power of government has been largely subordinated to the newly raised power of business and industry, and it is in this area that modern architecture has created its most impressive buildings. As a direct result most new government buildings have taken on this same anonymous commercial style.

The Romans had little trouble in developing a government character in their architecture. Since the Emperor was also a god, his palace should obviously look like a temple, and the temple-palace became the accepted governmental building style. This notion carried on for hundreds of years, and even continues to exist today.

The question is what expresses government character today. Surely it is more than a symbol of bureaucracy.

We seem fearful of giving any prestige or power to today's government buildings. There seems to be a widespread belief that politicians are some sort of crook, who deserve to be shut up in sort of a modified prison. Furthermore, most of these same politicians lack the imagination or courage to commission any government building of daring or quality in fear of being labeled spendthrifts. Therefore, the majority

of modern government structures possess a large degree of mediocrity.

This is not to say that there have been no new attempts at achieving a new symbol for government building. Frank Lloyd Wright's rejected scheme for the Arizona State Capitol is perhaps one of the best known of the new approaches toward achieving a new government character. Corbusier's government buildings for Chandigarh are another notable exception.

Ottawa's new city hall by architects Rother, Bland & Trudeau is less daring than Wright's or Corbu's schemes, but possesses a definite government character. Although the building is plain, it nevertheless suggests dignity and nobility.

Kenzo Tange's new city hall for Tokyo is much more sophisticated than the one in Ottawa, but its organization and principles are the same. Both of these buildings use materials suggesting permanence: limestone in the case of Ottawa and raw concrete in Tokyo. They are both built on a raised platform, which suggests monumentality in the traditional manner.

Perhaps these are some of the elements which can lend themselves to creating a more impressive symbol. It is clear that a government building needs a generous site, and that it will gain in dignity if it is raised on some sort of pedestal. Second, it should be constructed of some sort of permanent material to give the impression of a lasting monumental quality.

These are the principles on which this government center was designed. It is constructed of concrete and its masses are strongly tied into the Hill, thus achieving an impression of permanence. By locating it on a generous site, set back from the rest of the city, a certain dignity can be realized. It is placed on a pedestal which rises from the water, further accentuating this dignity and monumentality.

An informal massing has been developed in direct contrast to the formality of the Capitol. The site chosen is directly on axis with the Capitol. This allows the main axis from the Capitol to flow through its major space.

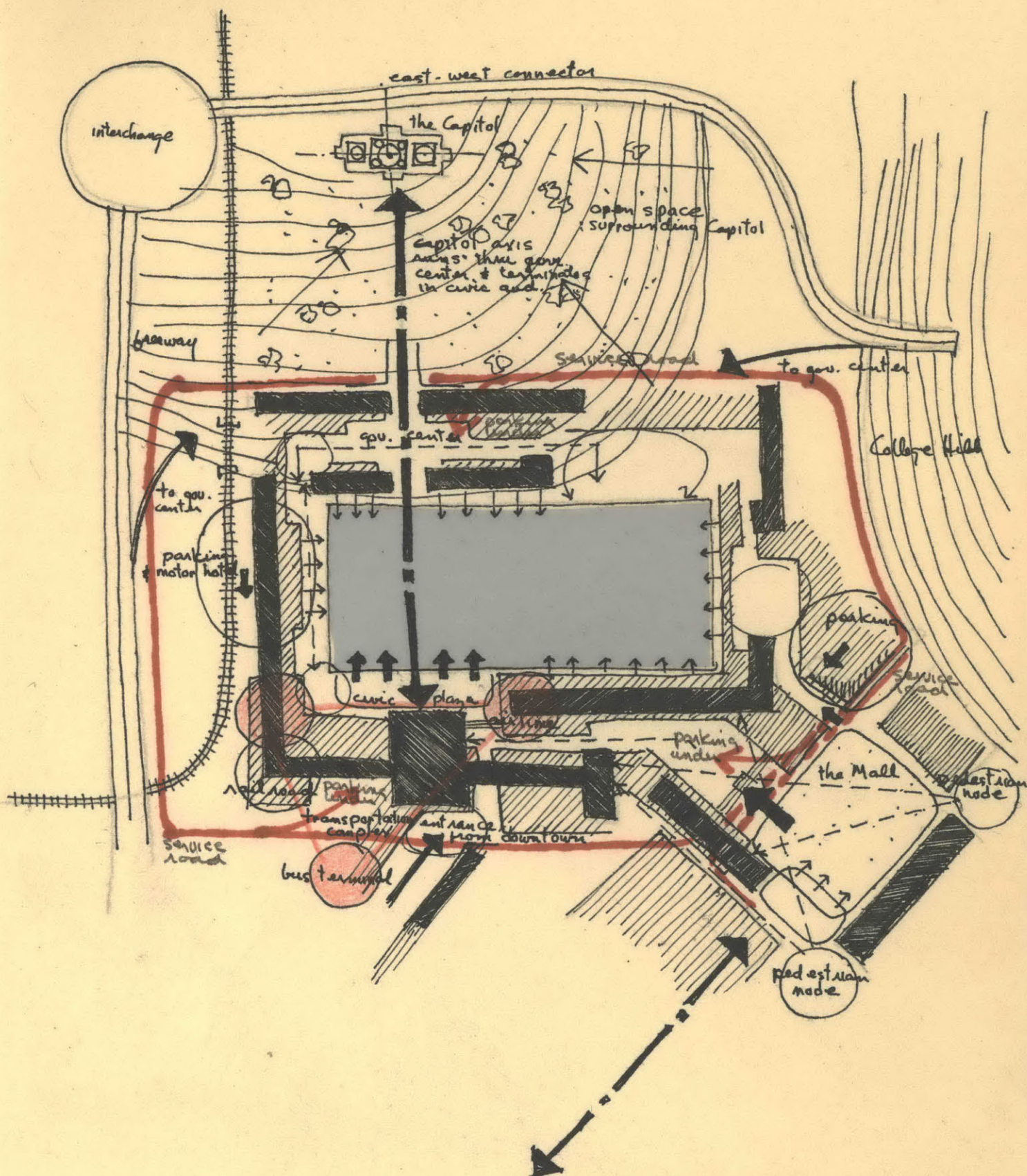
C. The Cove

The Cove has been recreated in the heart of this project. It becomes the major organizing element in the area, and provides the necessary separation between government and civic functions.

A close relationship between building mass and water was in every case desired. All of the important buildings within this project were developed along the water's edge. A maximum use of reflection in the water was attempted.

D. The Geometry

As the axis of the Capitol is angular to the city proper, the strong connection desired between the two was difficult to obtain. A termination of the Capitol's axis was felt necessary. Therefore, it was decided to continue this axis through



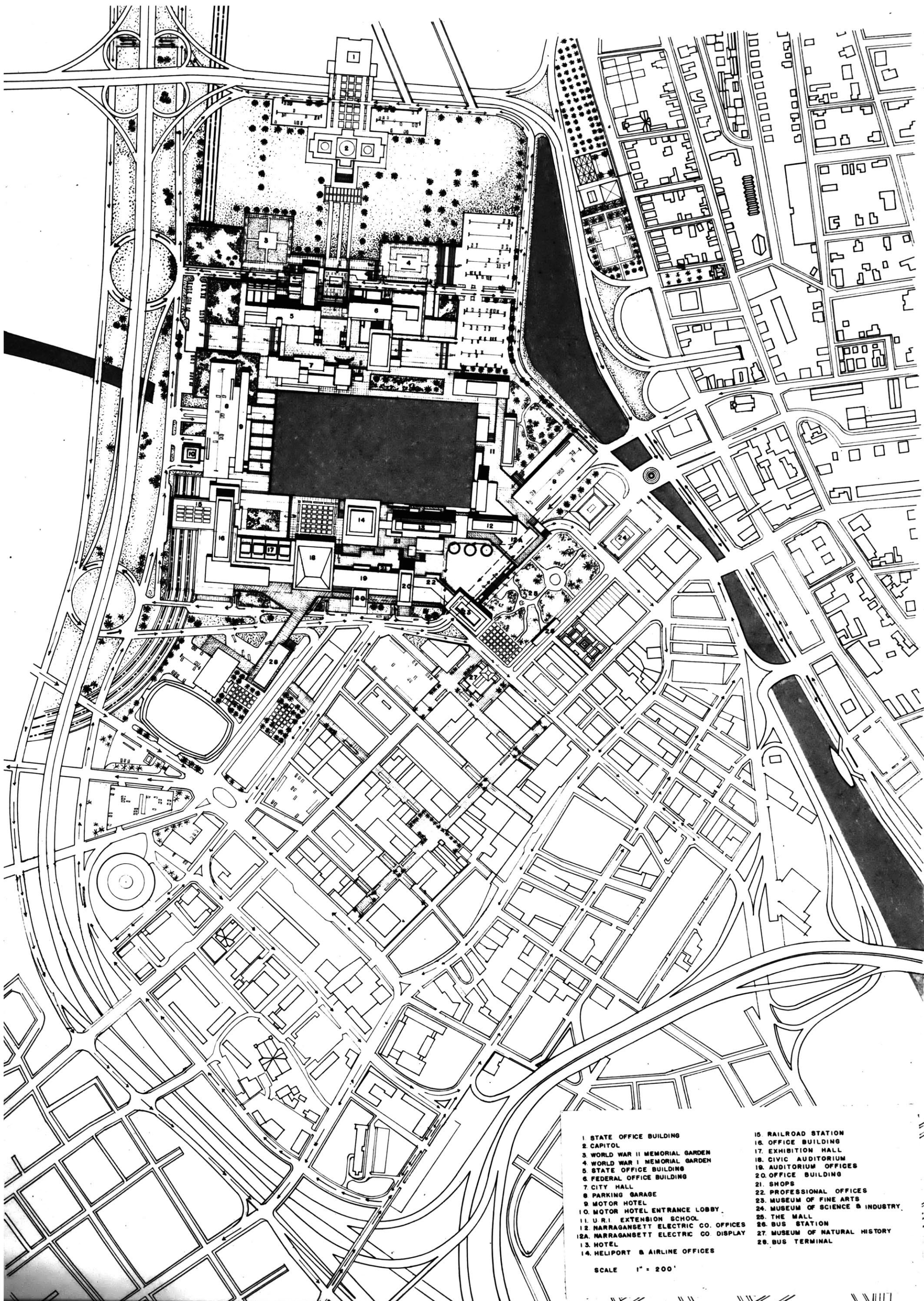
the Government Center, and end it in the "Civic Plaza", at the Civic Auditorium. This building in turn looks out over the Cove at the Government Center, and up to a climax in the Capitol. In this way a strong relationship is obtained between civic activity and government function without suppressing any of the monumentality or dignity desired.

A strong pedestrian link between this plaza and the Mall was important. To make the connection clear, it was found necessary to continue the geometry supplied by the Capitol into the Mall. This gives an irregular shaped space within the Mall, which leads one's eye directly into the heart of this project.

To further accent the dignity of the Government Center, it was found desirable to bring the axis from the Mall in such a manner that the Center and the Cove are hidden from view until within this Civic Plaza. There the entire monumentality and dignity achieved can be fully realized. In this manner elements of surprise and repose are combined into the design.

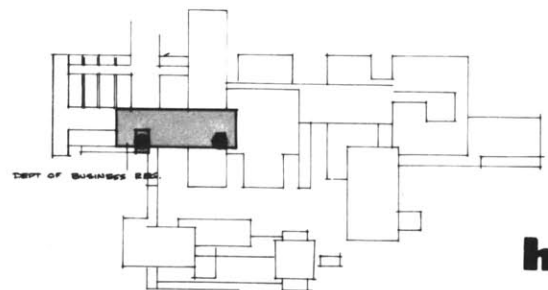
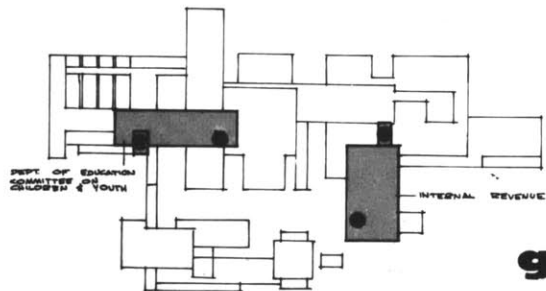
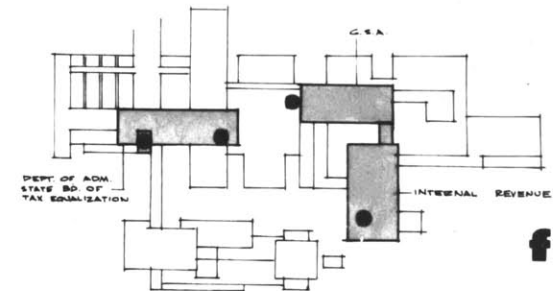
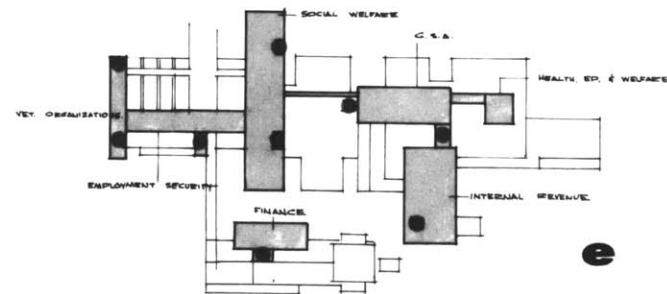
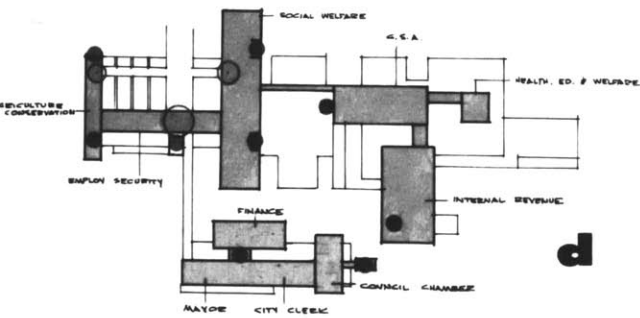
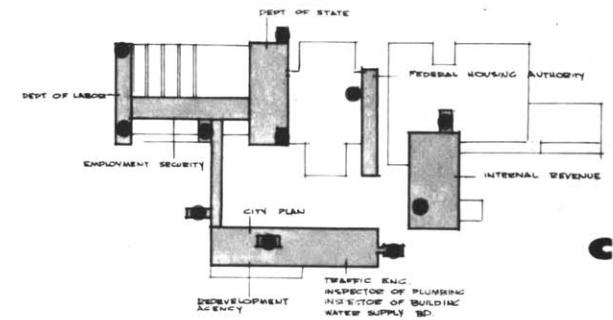
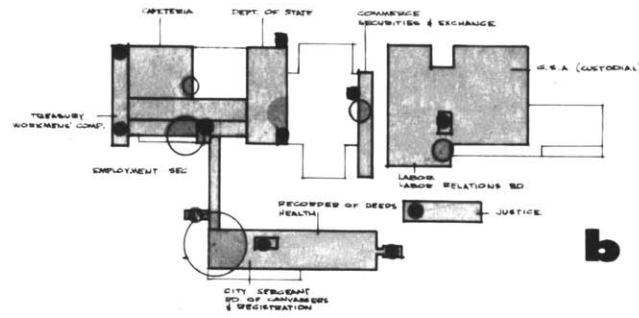
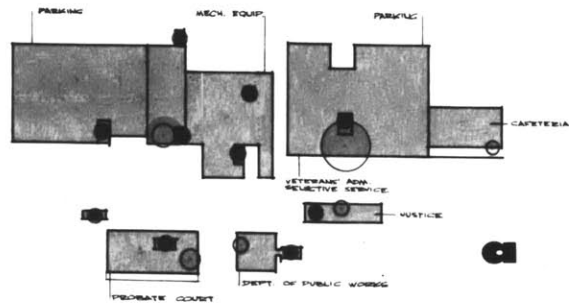
A sequence of spaces, both open and closed, large and small, has been created. From the large informal space of the Mall, the pedestrian is led up levels through closed, narrow spaces into the large open space of the Civic Plaza; from there into the rich semienclosed spaces within the Government Center and then out onto the Hill and the Capitol.





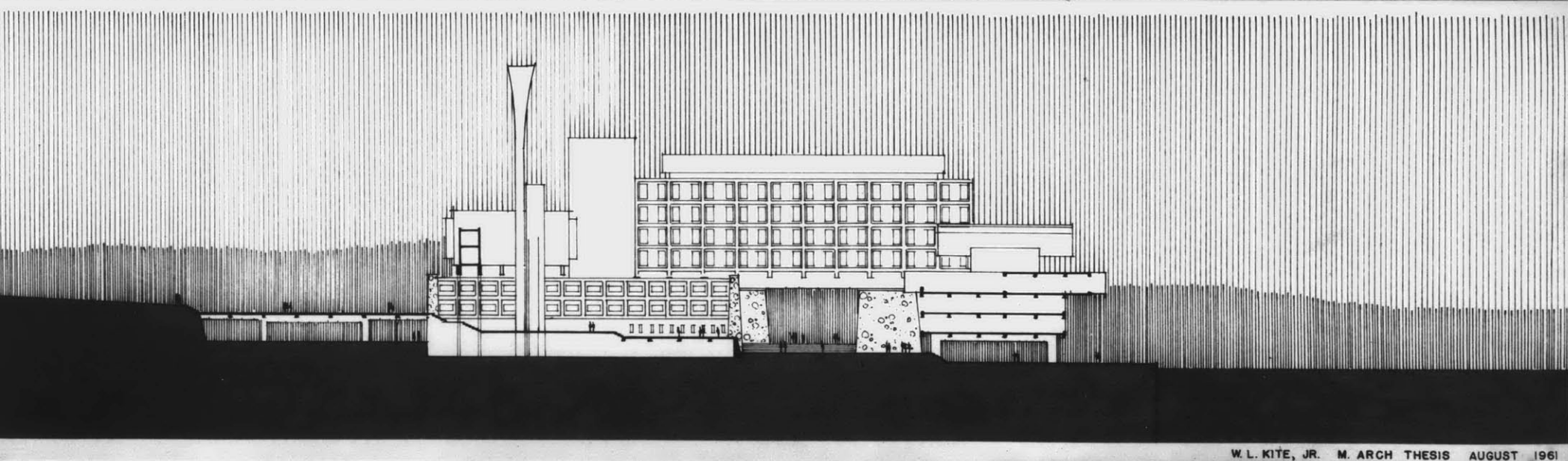
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|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. STATE OFFICE BUILDING | 15. RAILROAD STATION |
| 2. CAPITOL | 16. OFFICE BUILDING |
| 3. WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL GARDEN | 17. EXHIBITION HALL |
| 4. WORLD WAR I MEMORIAL GARDEN | 18. CIVIC AUDITORIUM |
| 5. STATE OFFICE BUILDING | 19. AUDITORIUM OFFICES |
| 6. FEDERAL OFFICE BUILDING | 20. OFFICE BUILDING |
| 7. CITY HALL | 21. SHOPS |
| 8. PARKING GARAGE | 22. PROFESSIONAL OFFICES |
| 9. MOTOR HOTEL | 23. MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS |
| 10. MOTOR HOTEL ENTRANCE LOBBY | 24. MUSEUM OF SCIENCE & INDUSTRY |
| 11. U. R. I. EXTENSION SCHOOL | 25. THE MALL |
| 12. MARRAGANETT ELECTRIC CO. OFFICES | 26. BUS STATION |
| 12A. MARRAGANETT ELECTRIC CO. DISPLAY | 27. MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY |
| 13. HOTEL | 28. BUS TERMINAL |
| 14. HELIPORT & AIRLINE OFFICES | |

SCALE 1" = 200'



PUBLIC ENTRANCE POINTS

VERTICAL TRANSPORT



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